

# BLOW·ME·DOWNER

ABOUT THE OUTER BAY OF ISLANDS, NEWFOUNDLAND

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## FOR LACK OF A GOOD FRONT PAGE IDEA

*I will be honest. Being a bit out of touch and unable to find anything of interest that I felt was really suitable for a front page item, I am, "winging it", even more than I usually do!*

OUR TWO TOWNS are losing population at quite an alarming rate, but this is typical of many small towns in Newfoundland and Labrador. Sustaining industries such as the fishery have been in perpetual decline for a generation since the Cod Moratorium in the 1990s, with fewer fish harvesters at work, causing the closure of fish plants, an important secondary industry in many small communities.

One concern in our communities is the lack of enthusiasm for any kind of festival over the last couple of years. We always used to have *The Blow-Me-Down Days* in August, when a weekend or more was devoted to games and various social events, and of course the Festival provided much-needed funding for the Joint Volunteer Fire Service along with a great weekend of entertainment. Also recent years had seen an upsurge of interest in developing ATV trails in the hinterland, due to funding raised from the Trails Festival on a weekend around Canada Day.

But unfortunately last year neither event took place. When I spoke to the leading organisers from previous years, in both cases they cited difficulty in gathering sufficient support in the form of helpers. Also some of the key organisers were not well enough to work on such projects. But is it really true that the lack of one or two persons in a couple of communities totalling over 800 people can mean that community social events cannot be organised? Apparently it is so.

Let's take a look at our population figures. (Statistics Canada)

Census Year	2011	2006	2001	1996	Difference 1996 to 2011
Lark Harbour	510	565	613	681	-171
York Harbour	347	346	388	416	-69
Total	857	911	1001	1097	-240

The numbers represent a total decline of 240 persons, or about 21%, between 1996 and 2011. Most of those who leave are young people who go in search of work, and they tend to take their young families with them, so that the proportion of older residents increases.

This results in a community with fewer individuals capable of functioning in a leadership capacity, and our towns become less socially active than they used to be. Also, our school is now catering

to fewer students than was the case in the past, so that fewer teachers and other resources are available, and parents feel the need to move to larger centres where schools can offer their children more facilities, and health care, entertainment and other services are more available.

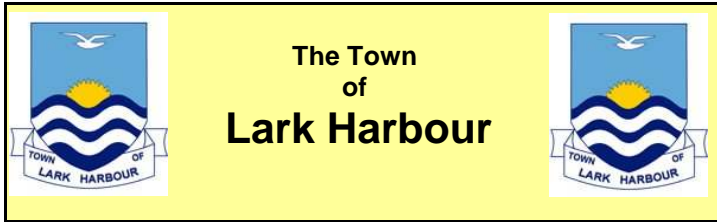
If this tale of decline leads you to feel pessimistic about what may happen in the future, then you are not alone in rural Canada. This same scenario has repeated itself in countless small towns across the entire country. And Canada is also not alone in the world, because almost every other country is experiencing the same problems. Once it was a problem confined to North America and Western Europe, but South America, Asia, including India and China, and even Africa are experiencing it now, where rural depopulation is the result of massive emigration to cities and even to other countries in search of "a better life". Each country has its own variations due to climate, geography and political considerations, and the problem is growing, with results similar to those we are experiencing here. Unhappily too it will get worse as aging takes a greater toll and climate change makes famine a more prevalent factor in some regions, making food resources scarcer and more expensive.

The causes have been identified for a long time. In 1962 Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* became a best seller that effectively started the environmental movement. As she explained, careless and indiscriminate use of pesticides causes damage to the environment, beginning a chain reaction that is eventually on so large scale that it gets out of control and affects much more than originally intended.

Miss Carson's theory was but a tiny part of a much larger picture which relates to many factors. We do not know why the cod disappeared when they did, or why they seem to be coming back in some places. Maybe it was too many seals, but again, why? We do know that the green crab is becoming a large threat to our fisheries as a result of careless practices by international shipping, and we also know that honey bees, essential pollinators of many food plants, are being destroyed by pesticide use. Environmental issues are so interlinked that we can't afford to ignore any of them.

If we wish to protect our children in a world that is becoming harsher and more self-destructive, we must work to curb these tendencies wherever they occur. But first we must clean up our own act, and earn the credibility to allow us to work with others. And we must also bear in mind that guns and bombs will only make matters worse in the long run.

SLH



## The Town of Lark Harbour

### Report of Regular Council Meeting of 2015 April 20

*Please note date change for Spring Cleanup to 11 & 12 May*

Present:

Mayor – Jamie Park; Deputy Mayor – Jeremiah Barry  
Councillors – Dennis Sheppard, Rose Sheppard, Olivia Spurrell  
Clerks – Peggy Sheppard (Recording Minutes), Joanna Pottle

*Meeting commenced at 7:00 pm.*

- ! Minutes of Meeting of 2015 March 30<sup>th</sup> adopted
- ! Water/Sewer Update – Application for protection of water supply returned from Crown Lands. Clerk instructed to redirect application to Department of Environment & Conservation.
- ! Amalgamation – Copy of letter from MHA Eddie Joyce requesting conference call with Hon Keith Hutchings, Minister.
- ! CEEP – Final payment received April 8. Project complete.
- ! ACAP Summer Camp – Age now extended to include children ages 7-12. Discussion on cost of this camp which was free in previous years, but this year there is a fee of \$95.
- ! Dilapidated Properties – Letter received from dilapidated property owner who indicated he will be coming here to make necessary repairs this summer. Will give owner until end of September to make repairs. Brief discussion on other dilapidated properties.
- ! Oceans Day – Clerks have been in contact with Kim Sheehan regarding planning for this event that is scheduled to take place on June 8<sup>th</sup>. All agreed to table at next meeting.
- ! National Day or Mourning – There will be a wreath laying ceremony on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at St John the Evangelist Church at 25 Main Street, Corner Brook. Deputy Mayor Jeremiah will lay a wreath on behalf of the Town of Lark Harbour. Clerk directed to follow up with Mr Jim O’Neill for further information.
- ! Property located at Devils Head – Reply expressing interest in this land sent. Council is awaiting a reply.
- ! Fire Department – JCP application for funding for fire hall upgrades has been submitted
- ! Financial Report – approved. No accounts payable at this time..
- ! All agreed to hold off on paying loan for phase 1B until auditor’s report received and/or decision is made on amalgamation.
- ! Building Permits – all applications approved.
- ! Caregivers Inc are expressing interest in holding a footcare clinic at the office. They can also administer Vitamin B12 needles. Agreed to contact VON before making any commitments to ascertain if they too can administer Vitamin B12 and do blood collection, since they already hold a footcare clinic here. To be tabled at next month’s meeting.

- ! Provincial Health and Wellness Grant Program – Approval has been received in the amount of \$8750.00. These funds will be used to promote healthy living through exercise classes, ie. Zumba, kick boxing, yoga, etc.
- ! 2014-2015 Capital Grant Program – Discussion on \$7500.00 received last fall for the construction of an outdoor skating rink. All agreed to get quotes from contractors to have ground work completed this year.
- ! Proposed boundary changes – Correspondence received from MHA Eddie Joyce regarding Public Meeting taking place on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at the Glynmill Inn, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm.
- ! Road Conditions – Route 450 and Down Below – Review of correspondence received for repairs Down Below and snow removal behind rock cages near Blow-Me-Down Mountain. Agreed to contact the Department of Transportation and Works regarding potholes in and around Lark Harbour, and the deteriorating condition of the road near Copper Mine Brook.
- ! **Spring Clean Up/Tire Collection/Vehicle Wreck Removal – The date for Spring Clean Up has been changed to May 11<sup>th</sup> for Lark Harbour and May 12<sup>th</sup> for York Harbour. Residents will be asked to refrain from putting out garbage until Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. Clerk to arrange for vehicle wreck removal and tire collection.**
- ! Two complaints received from 2 sources regarding the same dog. Clerk directed to contact RCMP. Several complaints received to date. A letter will be sent to the dog owner.
- ! Dates for the mock emergency exercise in Norris Point have been set for Thursday September 17<sup>th</sup> and Friday September 18<sup>th</sup>.
- ! Shingles have blown off the Town Hall roof over the winter; contractor will be out to make repairs. This is under warranty.
- ! Brief discussion about the recreation committee. A Councillor expressed interest in having this committee made active again. All in favour.
- ! Condition of Beacon Road – to be tabled at next month’s meeting.
- ! Request from Bay of Islands Volunteer Search and Rescue for donation – Motion passed to make a \$50.00 donation.
- ! Correspondence reviewed with no follow up necessary.

*Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 pm.*

## SPRING CLEAN UP TIRE COLLECTION VEHICLE WRECK REMOVAL

*Please note the dates  
have been changed to*

**Lark Harbour May 11<sup>th</sup> Monday  
York Harbour May 12<sup>th</sup> Tuesday**

*Residents are asked to refrain from putting out garbage  
until Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>*

Editorial

**OUR ELECTORAL VOTING SYSTEM**

In the 2011 Election the Conservatives were elected with a majority of Seats in the House of Commons (166 out of 308) but with less than 40% of the Popular Vote. Canada is therefore being run by a government with a mandate of less than half of those who voted. With a different voting system, the result could still have elected the Conservatives, but if the vote yielded a *clear majority* of at least 50% plus one vote, then it would be perceived as much fairer.

(See figures below)

2011	TOTAL POPULAR VOTE	% of VOTE
Conservatives	5,832,401 votes	39.62
All Other Parties	8,757,658 votes	60.38

These figures demonstrate a very significant problem in our *Majority Rule* or "First Past the Post" election system, where the result of a simple count of votes in each riding determines the winner for that riding. The same problem can exist within a specific riding if more than two candidates are on the ballot and the winner receives, for example, 40% of the vote, while the other two candidates receive 30% each. The greater the number of candidates offering in a specific riding, the more unfair the result can potentially be.

Consider this example: There are five candidates and ballot forms are printed with candidates' names down the left side, and one column for each choice voters will have, up to the number of candidates offering, five in this example. Voters select their favourite candidate, then their second choice, then third, and so on, perhaps until all candidates have been ranked, although those who so choose are not required to make all choices available to them. To keep the example simple we will assume that every voter made all four choices. The voting comes out thus:

Alice	35%	(first choice of 35% of voters)
Bob	25%	(first choice of 25% of voters)
Carol	20%	(first choice of 20% of voters)
David	15%	(first choice of 15% of voters)
Emma	5%	(first choice of 5% of voters)

Consider now a second ballot. Emma would be eliminated but her 5% would be shared among the remaining four candidates by applying the second choices of her supporters. However this may still not be enough to give anyone a clear majority.

Alice	$35\% + 2\% = 37\%$	(2 <sup>nd</sup> choice of 2%)
Bob	$25\% + 1\% = 26\%$	(2 <sup>nd</sup> choice of 1%)
Carol	$20\% + 1\% = 21\%$	(2 <sup>nd</sup> choice of 1%)
David	$15\% + 1\% = 16\%$	(2 <sup>nd</sup> choice of 1%)

Now David is eliminated. The third choices of his supporters would then be applied.

Alice	$37\% + 5\% = 42\%$	(3 <sup>rd</sup> choice of 5%)
Bob	$26\% + 7\% = 33\%$	(3 <sup>rd</sup> choice of 7%)
Carol	$21\% + 4\% = 25\%$	(3 <sup>rd</sup> choice of 4%)

And finally Carol is eliminated. The fourth choices of her supporters would then be applied.

Alice	$42\% + 4\% = 46\%$	(4 <sup>th</sup> choice of 4%)
Bob	$33\% + 21\% = 54\%$	(4 <sup>th</sup> choice of 21%)

Bob is now declared the winner, with 54% of voter support, including 29% who switched to him in preference to any of the others. Meanwhile Alice held onto her core support of 35%, but gained only 11% from Carol, David and Emma.

This is plainly a much fairer system than *First Past the Post*, because under that system in our hypothetical election Alice would have been elected but with the support of only 35% of the electorate. In contrast, under the *Preferential* system our hypothetical winner finishes with 54% electorate support, a clear majority, while Alice obviously had the support of only 46% when all voters' preferences were taken into account. Bob is still first choice of only 25%, but he gained 2<sup>nd</sup> choice support from 1%, 3<sup>rd</sup> choice from 7%, and then a big boost of 4<sup>th</sup> choice from 21% of voters.

The system described here is not a perfect one, but in common with many democratic processes it is a compromise which is likely to be acceptable to many more voters than *First Past the Post*. It is also of course only one possibility of many which Canada should examine carefully if or when a change is contemplated.

Are we ever likely to see a system of this kind introduced in Canada? It seems rather unlikely as long as the present government is in power, since First Past the Post appears to serve their purpose very well, getting them elected three times, though each time without a clear majority (See endnote). However the NDP and Liberals have both expressed some support for change. Parties like the Greens, who elected only one MP, Elizabeth May, in 2011, could gain significantly

UTOPIA NATIONAL ELECTION ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF WONDERLAND				
NAME OF CANDIDATE	1 <sup>ST</sup> CHOICE	2 <sup>ND</sup> CHOICE	3 <sup>RD</sup> CHOICE	4 <sup>TH</sup> CHOICE
ALICE			X	
BOB				
CAROL		X		
DAVID	X			
EMMA				X

HOW TO VOTE

- Select the name of the Candidate who is your FIRST choice.
- Then mark a large X in the row beside his or her name in the column labelled "1-CHOICE"
- Select the name of the candidate who is your SECOND choice
- Then mark a large X in the row beside his or her name in the column labelled "2-CHOICE"
- You may select no more than FOUR Candidates of the FIVE listed.
- The remaining Candidate would be your last choice but will not be marked with an X.

**DO NOT MAKE ANY OTHER MARKS ANYWHERE ON THIS BALLOT FORM  
OR YOUR BALLOT WILL BE DISQUALIFIED**

under some other systems like *Proportional Representation* since their 3.9% of the popular vote could translate into ten or more seats but only one Green candidate was elected.

There are numerous variations on the Preferential Voting System system, as well as many other systems such as Proportional Representation. Also, whatever system might, if ever, replace the present one, fine tuning and 'tweaking' of the process may be needed when experience has been gained after a few uses.

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The example just described is still quite simple, but it serves to illustrate how a more sophisticated voting system might work. Voters select their favourite candidate, then their second choice, then third, and so on, although they are not compelled to rank all candidates if they do not wish to. Then the first choice votes are counted and if no clear majority has been achieved, as is most likely, an elimination system comes into play, whereby the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped. Each voter's second choice is then applied, and if necessary even the third choices may be needed, until finally one candidate achieves a clear majority of 50% plus one or more votes. A variation on this system might be for votes to be weighted, where candidates are allocated points according to each voter's assessment, perhaps 8 points for first, 4 for second, 2 for third, and 1 for fourth, in a five candidate field. This however is only one possible example.

The process is much simpler than it sounds. Voters would receive a ballot paper with the names of the candidates in alphabetical order, just as they do now. The difference would be that instead of one column where the X is written to identify the chosen candidate, there would be several columns, as many as there are candidates. The voter will then write an X in the first column next to his candidate of first choice; then in the second column an X next to his second choice, and so on until he has made as many choices as are available or as many as he wishes to make. However it is probably more likely that the ballot will be designed to be read by a computer scanner, or that the entire voting process will be done on a voting machine, since vote counting will be more complicated than on our traditional ballots. That, however, is another separate issue.

**CONCLUSION**

The example described in this article is of course intended as an illustration of the kind of system which could be introduced in any of our electoral systems, Federal, Provincial, Municipal, or even for large non-political organisations where it is felt that the system currently in use does not provide the degree of fair representation demanded in an election.

A democratic election should produce a result where the government has been elected by a clear majority (50% + one vote) of the eligible voters. The system presently being used in Canada in both Provincial and Federal elections clearly does not do this. The result is that more than half the electorate feels that it is not represented by the government which has the official sanction of the system. In some cases many voters feel themselves to be effectively disenfranchised. This can then lead to frustration with the system and even withdrawal by many individuals who conclude, however erroneously, that voting is a waste of their time.

Every Canadian should be concerned when an election that claims to be democratic is not providing true democratic results. It may not be possible to eliminate every single fault or error in a voting system, but when it is shown that an election yields a winner who is supported by less than 50% of an electorate (a simple majority), it is obvious that corrective action needs to be taken. If such is not done, then the country in question cannot rightfully claim to be a true democracy.

SLH

**ENDNOTE**

**Simple Majority** - one individual or party in an election receives more votes than any other single individual or party.

**Clear Majority** - one individual or party in an election receives more votes than all the others combined.

**Obituary****DEREK ADEN PARK****1954 January 04 - 2015 April 23**

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS that the family of the late Derek Park announce his passing at Western Memorial Regional Hospital on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at the age of 61 years.

He leaves to mourn with fond and precious memories his loving wife Marie (née Byrne); son Aden (Shawna); daughter Stacy Park (Sheldon); grandchildren: Jaden, Keegan, Hunter, and Bella; siblings: Mildred Steward, Roy Park (Trudy), Pauline White (Leonard), Mike Park (Maxine), Silas Kervian (Sandra), and Ken Kervian (Tammy); parents-in-law Thomas and Elvia Byrne; in-laws: Rita (Brian) Barnes, Wavy (Carl) Sheppard, Dick (Lorrina) Byrne, Molly Byrne, Glen (Laura) Byrne, as well as a large circle of nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends. He was predeceased by parents Alonzo and Jean Park; sister Leverne Kervian; brother Jim Park; brothers-in-law Tom Stewart and Bud Byrne; sister in law Kay Byrne.

In keeping with Derek's wishes, cremation has taken place. Friends may visit St James Anglican Church, Lark Harbour on Sunday April 26, 2015 between the hours of 2-4 & 7-9pm from where the funeral service will follow on Monday April 27, 2015 at 2pm, officiated by Reverend Nelson Chatman with interment to follow at St James Anglican Church cemetery. As expressions of sympathy in lieu of flowers donations may be made to the St James Anglican Church Fund. The family guest book may be signed by visiting our website at [www.country-haven.ca](http://www.country-haven.ca). *"Forever In Our Hearts"*

**A MEMORIAL SERVICE**

to celebrate the Life of the Late

**Susan Forrest Swift Harvey**

who passed away tragically in an automobile accident  
on 2014 December 30<sup>th</sup>,  
will take place at St James Church, Lark Harbour on

**2015 May 24<sup>th</sup>, Sunday***The family invites all friends to attend.**Refreshments will be served in the Church Hall after the Service*

Congratulations to **OLIVIA PERRY**

on her success in the *Poetry in Voice* National Poetry Recitation Competition held recently in Montreal. It's the first time any student from St James All-Grade School, Lark Harbour, has won such a competition, and the school and her community are proud of her achievement. *Well done, Olivia !*

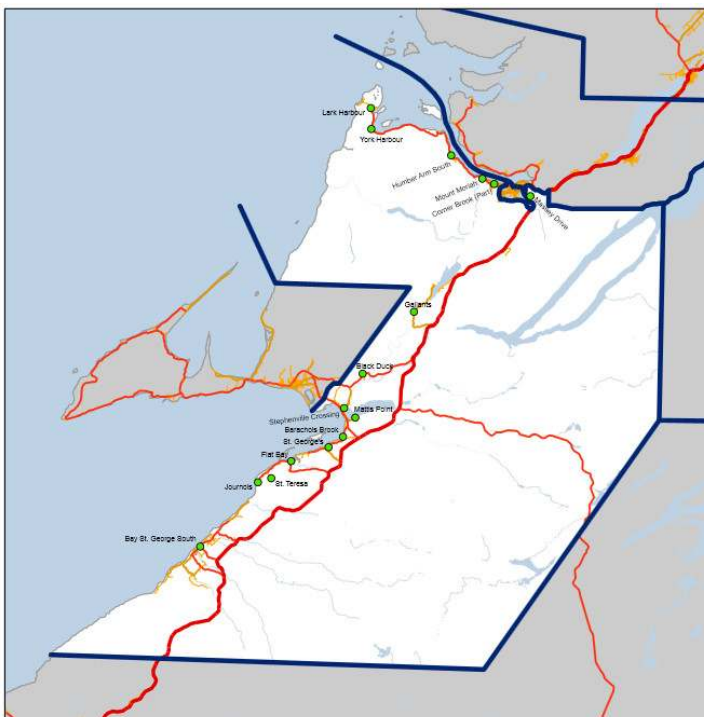
Click [HERE](#) for picture and to read more.

## PROPOSAL FOR NEW PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE now that new boundaries for our Provincial Electoral Districts have been proposed by the Commission appointed for that purpose. This would allow the present 48 districts to be reduced to 40, thereby saving some money on MHA salaries and expenses. A good thing, you say, and on the face of it, that is correct. However, to do this, Electoral Districts have to be redrawn larger, meaning that in many cases geographical areas and therefore time and cost of travel will be increased. Taking into account the greater distances to be covered, there will be much more need for an MHA to charge for nights on the road when visiting the extremities of the new District.

That is what has been proposed with regard to our own District, and this can be seen easily with a quick glance at the map of the newly-named [District of Humber South-St George's](#). Or you may peruse the [Legal Description of the District](#). Beginning at Lark Harbour, the new District would include all communities on the South Shore of the Bay of Islands, including part of Corner Brook. This is basically the same as the present District. But then the entire North Shore from Cox's Cove to Corner Brook has been removed and becomes part of another new district called [Humber North](#).

In place of those areas a large section along the TCH towards Port aux Basques is added, including Gallants, Black Duck, Stephenville Crossing, Mattis Point, Barachois Brook, St George's, Flat Bay, St Teresa's, Journois and terminating at the Town of Bay St George South almost at Wreck House. It is not clear on the map. This is the full length of Route 450 from Lark Harbour to the TCH at Corner Brook, then westwards on the TCH to Bay St George South. Adding in also the side roads leading from the TCH into the communities, it would seem that an MHA visiting his District will incur significant expenses for hotel accommodations that were not needed previously.



For a clearer version of this map, click [here](#)

It seems inevitable therefore that *Humber South-St George's* will be doomed to much more limited representation than does our section of the present Bay of Islands District. However the change fits with what seems to be the current government fashion of neglecting rural areas of the province while allowing unfettered growth and development on the Avalon and nearby regions.

## OMAR KHADR : BELLWETHER OF THE CANADIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

OMAR KHADR is once more in the news. The one positive thing that can be said about that is that if he had been held in any of so many countries, he would have disappeared by now. But despite Khadr's continued existence in the limelight, Canada should be well and truly ashamed of its performance in the entire case.

**First**, the boy, at about age 14, was pressed by his father into going to fight in Afghanistan. How many other Canadian boys of that age would not have done the same, rather than to defy his father?

**Second**, the crime he was accused of committing was of killing an American soldier. This is presented to us as if it was the wrong thing to do. Surely, it was; but then, killing another human being is always a questionable act. The argument could easily be raised that Khadr was simply protecting the country that was his cultural origin, as any American over there might have done, and many did.

**Third**, he was a child at the time, and should have been treated as a child soldier, but instead he has been quite consistently treated by the American and Canadian legal systems as if he was an adult offender, incarcerated with other adults who were fighting in many ways a guerilla war similar to that fought by Americans during their War of Independence, as they call it still, although it was definitely an illegal armed insurrection.

**Fourth**, he has been held in prison, including several infamous ones, for about half his life—he was 15 when accused, but is now 28 years old. [Said one of his lawyers, Nate Whiting](#), “Omar is fortunate to be back in Canada where we have real courts and real laws.” Yes, we have real courts—they have judges and juries and all the other components of a real court, and yes, we have real laws too—but imagine the outcry our hypocritical Federal Government would have made if what *they* have done to Khadr in the name of justice had been done in China, or Russia, or Cuba not so long ago.

**Fifth**, Courts in the past have ruled that Khadr should be freed on bail, or held in a more congenial minimum security or youth custody, but the Canadian Government in its magnanimity has challenged those rulings at every turn, and Khadr remains in prison.

Personally I think the entire case of Omar Khadr has been inappropriately and badly handled by both American and Canadian authorities. And where the Canadian courts have found that he should receive different treatment, those responsible for continuing to deny him what the courts have legitimately found should themselves be found in contempt of court. Perhaps Khadr should not walk completely free, but his rights *as a child soldier* should have been, and still can be, upheld, although belatedly. But the Federal Government still intends to challenge the most recent court ruling that Khadr should be allowed bail.

If this ruling is not recognised and followed by the Government of Canada, then our international status as a compassionate and law-respecting nation, already tarnished, is likely to be seen as a mere joke, although a sick and hypocritical one. SLH